



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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Wisconsin's 12 Presidential Scholar semifinalists named

MADISON—Twelve Wisconsin high school seniors have been named semifinalists in the 2009 Presidential Scholars program, one of the nation's highest honors for high school students.

"These young people represent some of the brightest, hard-working students in Wisconsin schools," said State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster. "Along with their devotion to academic excellence, leadership in extracurricular activities, and service to community, these students have the support of parents, teachers, and their communities that fosters success."

The Presidential Scholars program was established in 1964 to recognize and honor some of our nation's most distinguished high school students. The state's 12 semifinalists are among approximately 560 semifinalists for the 2009 Presidential Scholars program. Wisconsin's Presidential Scholar semifinalists are

- Joseph D. Balistreri of Fox Point, Marquette University High School, Milwaukee;
- Nicholas S. Blecha, De Pere High School;
- Wyatt J. Brothers, North High School, Oshkosh;
- Sean N. Conley, Marquette University High School, Milwaukee;
- Suvai Gunasekaran, Memorial High School, Madison;
- Anthony D. Hoffman, Menomonie Senior High School;
- Elizabeth M. Huston, Stevens Point Area Senior High School;
- Evan Liang of Oneida, Southwest High School, Green Bay;
- Hannah M. Postel, Memorial High School, Madison;
- Chelli Riddiough, West High School, Madison;
- Philip V. Streich of Platteville, Home School; and
- Amy M. Yin, Onalaska High School.

(more)

Most students are identified for the Presidential Scholars program based on exceptional performance on the ACT or SAT college admissions tests. A smaller number of students are nominated through their participation in the Arts Recognition and Talent Search program, sponsored by the National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts.

From nearly 2.8 million graduating high school seniors, approximately 3,000 students were identified as candidates for the program and invited to complete application materials that include essays, self-assessments, secondary school reports, and transcripts. An independent, national committee of educators convened by the Commission on Presidential Scholars reviews application materials to select semifinalists.

The Commission on Presidential Scholars will make the final selection of the nation's 121 academic Presidential Scholars—one male and one female from each state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and from families of U.S. citizens living abroad. In addition, up to 15 students may be chosen at large. The Presidential Scholars Commission also chooses up to 20 Presidential Scholars in the Arts for a total of up to 141 Presidential Scholars.

Students chosen as Presidential Scholars travel to Washington, D.C., in June, where they will meet with government officials, educators, authors, musicians, and scientists. They also will receive a Presidential Scholars medallion at a ceremony sponsored by the White House. Scholars are asked to identify one teacher who was most influential in their education. The teacher also is invited to the nation's capital for National Recognition Week and receives the Presidential Scholars program Teacher Recognition Award.

"These students are deserving of recognition and praise for their efforts to succeed in their academic studies, as leaders in their schools, and as citizens in their communities," Burmaster said. "They are representative of the many, many fine students who will graduate from our high schools in this spring."

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